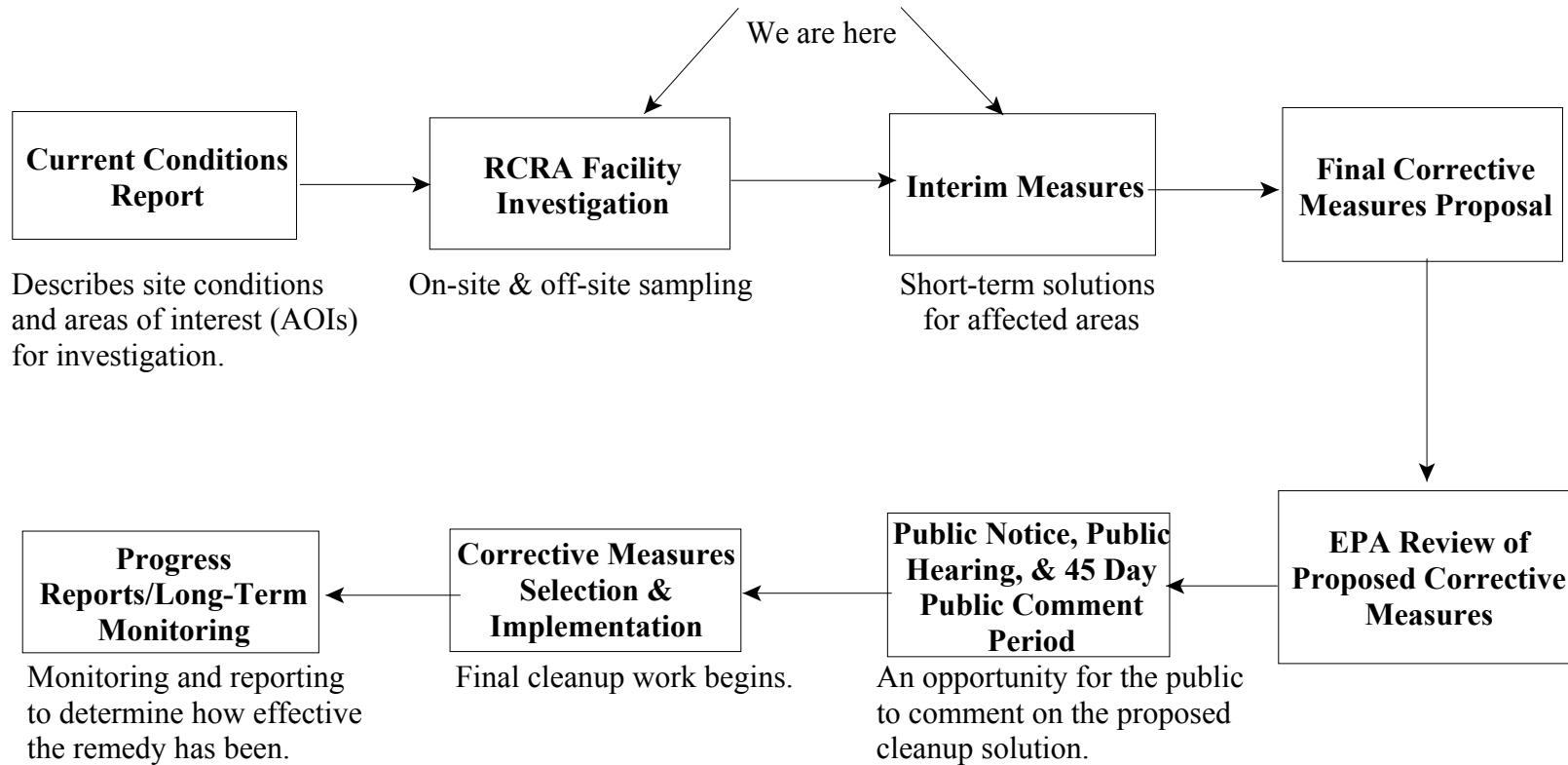


General Remedial Process



EPA has put together this fact sheet to help provide you with more information about the ongoing environmental investigation at the GM Bedford Powertrain facility.

This fact sheet is broken into the following subject categories:

1) General Information

- **What does the agreement between GM & EPA mean?**
- **Who is involved in this project?**
- **Is GM still using PCBs?**

2) The Cleanup Process

- **What stage is the cleanup process in now?**
- **What needs to be done before final off-site cleanup can begin?**
- **What needs to be done before on-site cleanup can begin?**
- **Do I have a say in how the cleanup is handled?**
- **How long will the cleanup take?**

3) Drinking Water

- **Is my drinking water safe?**
- **How are PCBs detected in and removed from my drinking water?**
- **How will I know if PCBs are in my drinking water?**
- **How can I learn more about my drinking water?**

4) Health Concerns

- **How do I know if I've been exposed to PCBs?**
- **A few people in my family have died from cancer; is their death from cancer related to the PCB contamination on my property?**

5) Contact Information

GENERAL INFORMATION

What does the agreement between GM & EPA mean?

GM entered into a voluntary corrective action agreement with the U.S. EPA in March 2001 to address contamination at this site. Under the agreement, GM will be investigating and remediating on-site and off-site contamination. EPA is the lead agency overseeing the project.

Who is involved in this project?

U.S. EPA is working together with other partner agencies on both the federal and local level to ensure that their concerns are addressed as well while work proceeds under this agreement. Other involved agencies include: U.S. EPA Federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Section, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. FWS), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

Is GM still using PCBs?

No. PCBs are no longer manufactured in the United States and EPA banned most uses of PCBs in 1979. GM does not use electrical equipment containing PCBs. An inventory of their current transformers provided during a recent inspection indicated no PCBs. The most current (1996) sampling results for PCBs of GM's hydraulic manufacturing systems were also provided during that inspection and they were all non-detect.

THE CLEANUP PROCESS

What stage is the cleanup process in now?

As seen in the figure, we are in the investigation stage of the cleanup process. GM is looking at on-site areas of interest where wastes were spilled or handled. GM is also looking off-site at impacted streams to determine the extent of contamination. Much of the data from the off-site stream investigation is available and we are getting good information on the extent of the off-site PCB contamination. Also, as seen in the figure, appropriate Interim Measures (i.e., short-term solutions) may be performed at this stage to reduce the risks at certain areas.

What needs to be done before final off-site cleanup can begin?

Before a final cleanup of off-site contamination can begin, we need to be sure that all sources of continued PCB discharge are identified and controlled. Historically, GM's waste water treatment plant outfall was the main source of PCB discharge to the creeks. We believe this source has been controlled through the installation of a modern treatment plant with a carbon adsorption filter in place to extract the residual contaminants. This outfall is permitted under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) which requires GM to test the outfall for chemicals on a regular basis including PCBs.

We will still need to evaluate if there are other sources of contamination which could still be discharging PCBs to the groundwater and/or surface water systems (e.g., springs, seeps, etc.) If any other sources are found to be contributing to off-site PCB contamination, they will need to be controlled prior to instituting a final cleanup so that areas that are cleaned will not be re-contaminated in the future.

However, in cases where needed, Interim Measures may be implemented to reduce risks posed by contaminated areas until the final cleanup can be done. This could mean temporarily fencing off areas, adding a cover to prevent exposures, etc. Interim Measures are typically site-specific, meaning that there can be different temporary solutions for different areas. GM and EPA are currently evaluating Interim Measures options for certain affected properties and implementation could begin shortly.

What needs to be done before on-site cleanup can begin?

GM is investigating on-site areas for contamination. Once these areas are identified and the extent of contamination is known, plans for remedial actions may begin.

Do I have a say in how the cleanup is handled?

Yes. When GM proposes final corrective measures (i.e., a final cleanup plan), the EPA will review that proposal and either agree or disagree with GM. If EPA disagrees with GM, EPA will pick what it believes to be the proper remedy. The proposal will be presented to the public during a public hearing and the public will be allowed to provide comments on the proposal to EPA for a 45 day period.

EPA strongly encourages GM to present its preferred remedy to the community before formally submitting it to the agency. Holding workshops and informal public meetings about the Corrective Measures Selection (CMS) process, the remedies being considered, and the activities being conducted at the facility will keep the community involved and informed.

How long will the cleanup take?

All partners in this project are interested in beginning site cleanup as soon as possible. As more data becomes available, we will be able to better estimate how long the remedial action will take. Due to the complexity of the site, it is difficult to provide such an estimate at this time. Interim Measures may be put in place much sooner as a temporary solution in certain impacted areas to reduce risks until the final remedy can be implemented. Many people have noted the 2007 date mentioned in the voluntary agreement as the target date for GM to propose final corrective measures to the EPA. This date was placed in the agreement because, at the time the agreement was negotiated and signed, we did not have an idea of the extent of contamination, the complexity of the site, or how long it might take to reach a point at which a final remedy could be proposed. It should be noted that the project is moving along rapidly with much data having been collected to date. We will be doing everything possible to expedite the cleanup of the GM facility, the impacted streams, and off-site properties.

DRINKING WATER

Is my drinking water safe?

The City of Bedford receives its drinking water from the east fork of the White River. City water supplies must meet federally required treatment levels known as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). While EPA and state governments set and enforce standards, local governments and private water suppliers have direct responsibility for the quality of the water that flows to your tap. Water systems test and treat their water, maintain the distribution systems that deliver water to consumers, and report on their water quality to the state.

Private wells are not subject to Federal Regulations. However, GM has tested private wells near the GM facility to ensure that they are not contaminated with PCBs. Of the private wells sampled thus far, only one well was identified to have PCBs above the MCL. None of these private wells are used for human consumption of water.

How are PCBs detected in and removed from my drinking water?

The regulation for PCBs became effective in 1992. Between 1993 and 1995, EPA required your water supplier to collect water samples every 3 months for one year and analyze them to find out if PCBs are present above some lowest detectable level. If it is present above this level, which differs for each type of PCB, the water supplier must continue to monitor this contaminant.

If contaminant levels are found to be consistently above the MCL, your water supplier must take steps to reduce the amount of PCBs so that it is consistently below that level. The following treatment methods have been approved by EPA for removing PCBs: Granular activated charcoal adsorption.

How will I know if PCBs are in my drinking water?

If the levels of PCBs exceed the MCL, 0.5 parts per billion (ppb), the water supplier must notify the public via newspapers, radio, TV and other means. Additional actions, such as providing alternative drinking water supplies, may be required to prevent serious risks to public health.

How can I learn more about my drinking water?

EPA strongly encourages people to learn more about their drinking water, and to support local efforts to protect and upgrade the supply of safe drinking water. Your water bill or telephone book's government listings are a good starting point. Your local water

supplier can give you a list of the chemicals they test for in your water, as well as how your water is treated.

For help in locating these agencies or for information on drinking water in general, call:
EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline: (800) 426-4791.

HEALTH CONCERNS

How do I know if I've been exposed to PCBs?

There are tests to find out if PCBs are in your blood, body fat, and breastmilk. Because PCBs are found throughout the environment, nearly everyone is likely to have some measurable amounts of PCBs in their body. In the United States, average PCB levels in blood among people who have not had exposure in the workplace range from 4 to 8 ng/mL (parts per billion). Elevated levels of PCBs in comparison to the general population will show that you have been exposed to PCBs. The tests do not determine the source of your exposure, the exact amount or type of PCBs you have been exposed to, how long you have been exposed, or predict whether you will develop harmful health effects. If you do not have elevated levels of PCBs in your body, it is very unlikely that you have an increased risk of developing harmful health effects compared with the general population.

Blood tests are the easiest and safest method for detecting recent exposures to large amounts of PCBs. If you are concerned and want to find out whether you have been exposed to PCBs, you should contact your doctor. The ATSDR and ISBH contacts at the end of this fact sheet can also provide you and your doctor with information on blood testing.

A few people in my family have died from cancer; is their death from cancer related to the PCB contamination on my property?

It is difficult to determine whether a person's cancer was caused by PCB exposure because there are so many people who get cancer and so many causes of cancer. The risk that a person will develop cancer in his or her lifetime from any cause is about 1 in 3. We do know that laboratory animals that were fed PCBs developed liver cancer. However, studies of people exposed to PCBs, including workers exposed to high levels of PCBs, have not provided definitive evidence that PCBs cause cancer in humans.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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